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STATE OF NEVADA  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
**Division of State Lands**

MEMORANDUM

**QUESTION 1 PRELIMINARY STAFF DETERMINATIONS  
HABITAT CONSERVATION PLANS  
ROUND 1**

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This report outlines the preliminary determination to fund Question 1 Habitat Conservation Plan applications received during the first round of the program.

Habitat Conservation Plan Projects were initially ranked by Question 1 staff, and then reviewed and ranked by technical advisory groups. The advisory group recommendation was presented to the State Lands Administrator for a preliminary determination.

The preliminary determination to fund Round 1 Habitat Conservation Plan Projects is given below. An overview of the Question 1 Program follows the recommendations. ***The Nevada Division of State Lands (NDSL) is encouraging public comments on the list.*** Comments can be submitted to Kevin Hill, Program Coordinator, at 687-8306 or via email at [kjhill@lands.nv.gov](mailto:kjhill@lands.nv.gov) by September 29, 2004. Upon the conclusion of the comment period, staff and the State Lands Administrator will consider and respond to comments received, and finalize the list of projects to be funded.

**Question 1 Program  
Preliminary Staff Recommendations  
Habitat Conservation Plans  
Round 1**

**Habitat Conservation Plan Funding:**

<b>Total Recommended Grant Awards:</b>	<b>\$270,000</b>
<b>Total Funding Available:</b>	<b>\$270,000</b>

**Habitat Conservation Plan Projects Recommended for Funding**

**Battle Mountain and Fish Creek Sage Grouse Conservation Assessment and Implementation**

**LA-HC-04017**

Applicant: Lander County  
County: LANDER  
Total Project Cost: \$44,000  
Grant Award: \$28,000  
Project Description:

- The South Central Planning Group will conduct Rangeland Health Assessments for Sage Grouse.
- Assessments will occur in Copper Canyon, Buffalo Valley, within the North Buffalo allotments, and on adjacent private lands.

**Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Planning**

**WA-HC-04018**

Applicant: Department of Wildlife  
County: Statewide  
Total Project Cost: \$484,628  
Grant Award: \$134,500  
Project Description:

- The project will produce and/or compile information necessary to complete a statewide Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan.
- This planning process is a requirement of accepting federal aid funds available to build the Wildlife Diversity Program in Nevada.

**Nye County Short Term Habitat Conservation Plan**

**NY-HC-04037**

Applicant: Nye County  
County: NYE  
Total Project Cost: \$50,000  
Grant Award: \$47,500  
Project Description:

- Nye County, including the Town of Pahrump, will prepare a Short Term Habitat Conservation Plan to offset impacts to the desert tortoise until a broader comprehensive multiple species habitat conservation plan can be developed for the entire Mojave Desert region of Nye County.

**Southeastern Lincoln County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement**

**LI-HC-04002**

Applicant: Lincoln County

County: LINCOLN

Total Project Cost: \$445,000

Grant Award: \$60,000

Project Description:

- A draft Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan for the desert tortoise, southwestern willow flycatcher, and two plant species will be completed.
- An Environmental Impact Statement will be drafted and submitted to the US Fish and Wildlife Service to determine if impacts will be mitigated in the event a Section 10 Incidental Take Permit is issued to Lincoln County.

**Habitat Conservation Plan Projects:  
Not Recommended for Q1 Funding in Round 1**

**Elko Sagebrush Conservation Strategy Habitat Conservation Plan**

**EL-HC-04005**

Applicant: Elko County

County: ELKO

Total Project Cost: \$327,608\*

\*Cost is for three watersheds.

Grant Award: \$0

Project Description:

- The project proposes to assess three of 19 major watersheds within Elko County. The priority watersheds identified to be studied include Rock Creek, Little Humboldt, and Upper Humboldt.
- Each assessment will evaluate indicators of rangeland health, riparian functioning condition, and healthy sage grouse habitats.
- Upon completion of each watershed assessment, a Draft Watershed Management Plan will be completed that identifies specific management actions to be taken within each watershed.

## Question 1 Program Overview

### Introduction

The Conservation and Resource Protection Grant Program became known as the “Question 1 Program” when the Proposal to Issue Bonds for Conservation and Resource Protection under Assembly Bill No. 9 of the 17th Special Session appeared number 1 on the State of Nevada voter’s ballot. Nevada voters passed Question 1, thereby authorizing the State of Nevada to issue general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$200 million

*“...to preserve water quality; protect open space, lakes, rivers, wetlands, and wildlife habitat; and restore and improve parks, recreational areas, and historic and cultural resources.”*

Of the total bond issue, funding allocations were made as follows:

1. \$27 million to the Nevada Division of State Parks for property acquisition or capital improvements and renovations;
2. \$27.5 million to the Nevada Department of Wildlife for property acquisition, facility development and renovation, or wildlife habitat improvements;
3. \$25 million to the Las Vegas Springs Preserve in Clark County for planning and developing the preserve, providing wildlife habitat, and constructing support facilities;
4. \$10 million to Clark County for development of a regional wetlands park at the Las Vegas Wash;
5. \$35 million to Nevada’s Department of Cultural Affairs to establish a museum at the Las Vegas Springs Preserve;
6. \$10 million to Washoe County for enhancement and restoration of the Truckee River corridor; and
7. \$65.5 million to the Nevada Division of State Lands to provide grants for state agencies, local governments, or qualifying private nonprofit organizations for various programs including recreational trails, urban parks, habitat conservation, open spaces, and general natural resource protection projects.

The Nevada Division of State Lands coordinates with the other divisions and departments as necessary to insure that Question 1 funding is optimally spent. Technical Advisory Groups and Coordination Committees are established to assist with project identification and ranking, and to maintain communication between divisions/departments to promote program success.

## **AB-9**

AB 9 (Which is also referred to as “Question 1”) was a landmark environmental initiative designed to benefit, protect, and preserve Nevada’s natural resources. It authorized the state to issue general obligation bonds up to \$200 million for natural resource projects.

Funds generated by the bond sales are used to conserve valuable environmental assets as well as support recreational and cultural facilities throughout Nevada. AB 9 provides a fiscally responsible mechanism for addressing the needs of environmental, historic, and cultural resources across the state.

### **AB 9 Highlights**

- Provides funds for development of habitat conservation and open space plans;
- Provides funds to protect drinking water supplies and enhance/restore river systems in Northern Nevada (Truckee and Carson Rivers) and Southern Nevada (Clark County Wetlands Park);
- Provides funds for development of the Las Vegas Springs Preserve and to establish a permanent state museum in Clark County; and
- Ensures the ability to leverage funds from other sources – helps recipients meet the matching requirements for federal/state/local grants as well as funds from public and private foundations.
- Requires almost half of the bond funds to be matched by recipients.

### **Program Workshops**

Once Question 1 passed, Nevada Division of State Lands staff was charged with developing regulations to implement the program. Twenty public workshops and two public hearings were held across the state to gather input and formulate the regulations. All meetings were noticed in compliance with open meeting laws. The resulting Question 1 Administrative Regulations implement the program in a consistent manner, and insure the intent of AB-9 is realized.

### **Program Objectives**

The premises of the Question 1 Program are explicit in the enabling legislation and Administrative Regulations. In addition, the Nevada Division of State Lands is committed to insuring that the State Lands Question 1 Program element, the distribution of \$65.5 million, is fair and equitable. Applicants are steered through the application process to make sure that their project meets the intent of the program, and that their applications can be fairly ranked. Unranked applicants are encouraged to apply during subsequent application acceptance periods.

State-wide representation is sought by Question 1 staff. All counties have been contacted and are encouraged to take advantage of the program. Funding is intentionally metered out over time to allow applicants with limited resources to apply for funding before it is completely obligated to applicants ready today.

Projects that leverage other funding sources and that are linked to past and future projects will rank higher by design, thereby stretching Question 1 dollars as far as possible, and maximizing the amount of public benefit achieved through the program.

Most importantly, it is the objective of the Nevada Division of State Lands to administer its portion of the Question 1 Program towards the protection of natural resources and to maximize their conservation first. In most cases, the public will benefit immensely over time if not immediately, by insuring that critical private and public natural resources are managed using the best tools known today, including conservation easements.

### **Funding Available, Funding Cycles**

The Nevada Division of State Lands administers \$65.5 million of the \$200 million tied to Question 1. During the first grant award round, \$6 million was made available; this amount was determined by proportioning out the dollars available evenly over time. Round 1 dollars needed could not be easily anticipated (\$29 million in requests were received.) State Lands Question 1 staff expect future funding round dollar amounts to increase, and then decrease towards the end of the program's lifetime.

It may be appropriate for some project proponents to work with the Division of State Parks, the Department of Wildlife, or Clark and Washoe Counties rather than State Lands to get their project funded by Question 1.

All Question 1 funds must be sold to projects by November 5, 2008. Some projects may continue to see reimbursements as late as 2011. All bond funds sold are to be expended within three years of issuance. For this reason, projects that are deemed ready to implement should rank higher to insure timely expenditure of funding.

### **Question 1 Web Page**

For additional, up-to-date program information, the reader is advised to review the Question 1 Program web page that is linked to the Nevada Division of State Lands Home Page ([www.lands.nv.gov](http://www.lands.nv.gov).)